



## PHOTOS: Ash Wednesday at St. Cassian

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*St. Cassian Parishioners form a procession to receive ashes.*



*The ashes rest in glass bowls.*



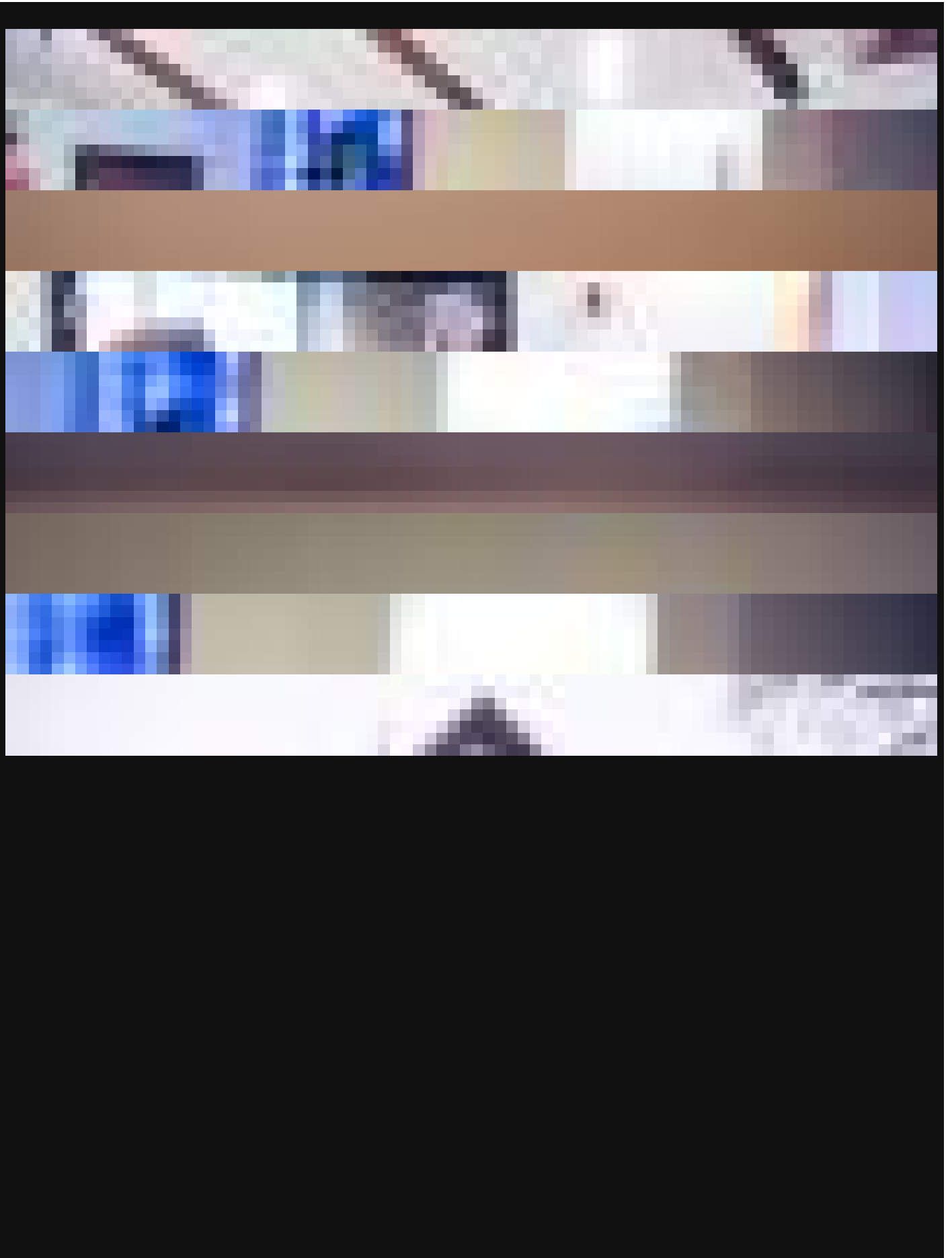
*Fr. Marc Vicari greets parishoners as they leave.*







*Carol Fay, Maria Orwicz, and Mary Walsh stand outside of St. Cassian Church.*



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Thousand of Christians celebrated Ash Wednesday on Feb. 26. Ash Wednesday opens Lent, a season of fasting and prayer.

Ash Wednesday takes place 46 days before Easter Sunday, and is chiefly observed by Catholics, although many other Christians observe it too.

Ash Wednesday comes from the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting. The practice includes the wearing of ashes on the head. The ashes symbolize the dust from which God made us. As the priest applies the ashes to a person's forehead, he speaks the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

The ashes are made from blessed palm branches, taken from the previous year's Palm Sunday Mass.